issued by the DGCI&S copies of which are available in Parliament Library.

South Asian Common Market

3524. SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state whether Government is considering for the promotion of a South Asian Common Market, a la European Union, with free flow of goods and personnel across frontiers of these countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): There is no proposal under consideration of Government for the promotion of South Asian Common Market with free flow of goods and personnel across frontiers of these countries.

The seven SAARC countries namely India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have entered into an agreement called the SAARC Perferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). The agreement was signed on 11th April, 1993 and would enter into force after compition of the formalities by all member states SAPTA establishes a framework for exchange of trade concessions among the member states of SAARC.

INDO-SYRIAN Trade Relations

3525. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enhance trade with Syria;

(b) if so, the fields in which the Indo-Syrian trade relations are proposed to be established;

(c) whether any pact has been signed by both the countries in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d). The 3rd Session of the Indo-Syrian Joint Trade Committee was held at Damascus during June 4-7, 1994. As per the agreed Minutes of this meeting, the two sides agreed to take all necessary steps for the extension and diversification of the commercial exchanges between the two countries, by all ways and means, the achieve better trade balance between the two countries, mainly by:

(i) Participation in the international fairs and exhibitions to be held in the two countries;

(ii) Encouraging exchange of visits between businessmen of the two countries;

(iii) Promoting the exchange of business information among the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of both countries;

(iv) Encouraging the concerned enterprises of the two countries to conclude equal deals/contracts for;

Syrian good: Rock phosphate, Petrocoke, Lentils, Barley, Cotton Yarn, etc.

Indian goods: June Rice, Rubber, Engineering goods, Spare Parts for electrical power plants, etc.

Import against special import Licences

3526. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to allow the import of some of the additional items including wood products, educational games and aviation turbine fuel against special import licences; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Additional items have been permitted against special import licences vide

Ministry of Commerce Public Notice No. 223/PN/92—97 dated 26th July, 1994, to assist and support the recognised Export Houses Trading Houses/Star Trading Houses/Super Star Trading Houses. Copy of the aforesaid Public Notice is available in Parliament Library.

Coffee Cultivation in Andhra Pradesh

3527. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred question 797 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st August, 1994 and state;

(a) whether Coffee Board has made any efforts to spread coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what is the present acreage of coffee in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) what is the identified acreage suitable for coffee cultivation in Andhra; and

(d) the details of the identified areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The present acreage of coffee in Andhra Pradesh is 9907 hectares.

(c) and (d). The identified acreage suitable for coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh is 11,040 ha. located in the districts of:-

Vishakhapatnam	8,689 ha.
East Godavary	2,251 ha.
Srikakulam	100 ha.

Role of the office of Commissioner of Exports in DGFT

3528. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the role of the office of Commissioner of Exports in the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT);

(b) whether any new functions have been assigned to that office in the newly designated DGFT;

(c) what are the details of export promotion activities of this office;

(d) what are the specific outlines of this job;

(e) whether specific responsibility for efficient processing of all applications for exports lies with the Commissioner of Exports and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (f). Export Commissioner is one of the officers in the Office of DGFT whose major role is to act as a facilitator for Export Promotion. The officer also looks after formulation of Export Policy, its procedures, Export Licensing and monitoring of Export Obligation. The new functions assigned to the Office of DGFT are given in Chapter II of the Export and Import Policy, April 1992 — March 1997, a copy of which is available in the Parliament Library.

Issue of Export Licences by DGFT

3529. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the average time it takes for DGFT is issue necessary export licence after clearance comes from the nodal Ministry;

(b) whether it is a fact that the procedural delays are quite irksome to small exporters from outside Delhi;

(c) whether there is any proposal to fix